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Summary record of the 35th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 19 March 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Bródi (Chairman) ..... (Hungary)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 149: Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (A/63/727 and A/63/768)

1. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Controller), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on financing arrangements for the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/63/727), recalled that, by its resolution 1861 (2009), the Security Council had extended the mandate of MINURCAT until 15 March 2010, authorized the deployment of a MINURCAT military component to follow up the European Union Force (EUFOR) in both Chad and the Central African Republic at the end of its mandate, decided that the transfer of authority between EUFOR and the said military component would take place on 15 March 2009, and also decided that MINURCAT should include a maximum of 300 police officers, 25 military liaison officers, 5,200 military personnel and an appropriate number of civilian personnel. The immediate cash and operational resources needed to support the Mission's expansion were estimated at $140,731,900 for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, inclusive of the amount of $49,868,400 that had been previously authorized by the Advisory Committee to meet the cost of initial critical logistical and personnel requirements of MINURCAT in order to facilitate the transfer of authority from EUFOR to the United Nations. The estimated additional requirements of $140,731,900, which took into account the amount of $301,124,200 that had already been appropriated by the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/233 B, for the maintenance of MINURCAT for the period in question, provided for the initial deployment by 30 June 2009 of 4,250 military contingent personnel, the construction and expansion of facilities and infrastructure to accommodate military personnel, the rehabilitation and expansion of existing airfields and the deployment of additional air assets.

2. The General Assembly was requested to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the Mission's expansion for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 in the amount of $140,731,900, inclusive of the amount of $49,868,400 previously authorized by the Advisory Committee and in addition to the amount of $301,124,200 already appropriated for the maintenance of MINURCAT for the same period under the terms of General Assembly resolution 62/233 B. The Assembly was also requested to assess the amount of $140,731,900 for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, in addition to the amount of $301,124,200 that it had already assessed for the maintenance of the Mission for the same period under the terms of its resolution 62/233 B.

3. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/63/768), noted that of the total amount requested by the Secretary-General, $67,871,200 related to military contingents and provided for the projected phased deployment of 2,810 troops by 30 June 2009 and the transfer on 15 March 2009 of 1,440 troops from EUFOR to MINURCAT authority. The Advisory Committee was not convinced that the 30 per cent delayed deployment factor applied in relation to the additional 2,810 troops could be achieved and therefore recommended that updated information on the Mission's planning assumptions should be provided to the General Assembly for its consideration of the question.

4. With regard to the additional requirements of $60,002,100 under facilities and infrastructure, the Advisory Committee regretted that the United Nations would not have full use of all former EUFOR facilities and infrastructure and that additional resources would therefore be required to construct new camps. The budget submission for 2009/10 should provide a detailed breakdown of projected expenditures under that item and the performance report for the current period should account adequately for the expenses incurred thus far. As for the $12,858,600 that had been requested for air transportation, according to information provided to the Advisory Committee, the configuration of the Mission's air fleet had been reviewed taking into account the projected phased deployment of troops until 30 June 2009, and the envisaged deployment of 16 additional helicopters and two fixed-wing aircraft would provide it with capacity commensurate with its new mandate. The Secretary-General should explore opportunities for savings in the area of air transportation through, inter alia, the sharing of air assets with other United Nations operations in the region.

5. As indicated in paragraph 13 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the Secretary-General's request. However, the Committee intended to discuss

in greater detail in its general report on the administrative and budgetary aspects of United Nations peacekeeping operations the increasing tendency to resort to commitment authority with assessment. Commitment authority should be used only as a short-term funding bridge mechanism pending the timely submission of fully detailed and justified budget documentation that would allow the General Assembly to decide on full appropriation for the amounts concerned.

6. **Ms. Helu** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group noted the Secretary-General's request for commitment authority with assessment for the expansion of MINURCAT for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, and the increase in the Mission's size, structure and cost following the transfer of authority from EUFOR to the United Nations on 15 March 2009. The Group fully agreed with the observations and recommendations contained in the Advisory Committee's report (A/63/768).

Other matters

7. **Ms. Krahulcová** (Czech Republic), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Montenegro; and, in addition, Ukraine, reiterated the European Union's strong disappointment at the late submission of documents for the current session. With the Committee already more than halfway through the first part of the resumed sixty-third session, documents were not yet available for items that had already been scheduled in the proposed programme of work for the following week. In particular, the Advisory Committee had not kept to its proposed schedule for the issuance of reports on such important items as safety and security, information and communications technology, and special political missions. That was unfortunate, since the last-minute submission of reports did not give the Committee sufficient time to consider the Secretary-General's proposals in detail and prevented a full discussion of all matters contained in the reports. For example, the Secretary-General's report on a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations (A/63/605) had been issued in December 2008 and it was therefore unacceptable that the Advisory Committee had not produced its related report in time for the current part of the resumed session.

8. The European Union therefore requested that the Chairman of the Fifth Committee should raise the issue of the late submission of documentation with the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and ascertain specifically what measures the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had taken to expedite issuances and whether the Advisory Committee had considered starting meetings earlier or working in the evenings in order to deliver. Documents must be available for consideration in all six official languages in due time before the start of deliberations and adequate measures must be adopted to prevent a recurrence of those situations. When produced, moreover, reports were not always of adequate quality and offered no real budgetary insights. An explanation was needed from the responsible officials. The European Union appealed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, the relevant Secretariat officials and the members of the Advisory Committee to ensure that documents were of the desirable quality and issued on time.

9. **Mr. Plunkett** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that the three delegations joined the European Union in expressing their frustration at the recurrent late submission of documentation. Too many important matters were being introduced in the final week of the first part of the resumed session to allow sufficient time for substantive discussion. It was disappointing to note that the General Assembly's decision to authorize the Advisory Committee to meet for two additional weeks in 2009 had yielded no improvement. A more comprehensive solution, involving the Fifth Committee, the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat, was therefore required.

10. **The Chairman** said that he had taken note of the views expressed and that the Bureau would take appropriate action.

11. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), responding to the questions raised, said that, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee made every effort to submit reports in due time for the Fifth Committee's consideration. Unlike that Committee, however, it did not have the luxury of deferring issues on which it had not reached a decision. The Advisory Committee handled extremely complex and sometimes controversial matters that required lengthy consideration. In addition, the reports it received sometimes lacked information, which had to be requested and obtained from the Secretariat resulting in

further delays. Moreover, although the Advisory Committee's members sometimes held divergent views, every effort was made to reach consensus decisions with a view to facilitating the Fifth Committee's work. The Advisory Committee did not receive reports six weeks in advance and had sometimes considered a report from the Secretariat within 24 hours of receiving it. The report specifically mentioned by the representative of the European Union was just one isolated example.

12. The Advisory Committee would continue to strive to do better in meeting the Committee's tight time constraints. However, as the representative of Canada had acknowledged, responsibility for the issue did not lie with the Advisory Committee alone. Committee members should stop attacking the Advisory Committee, since the issue related to the process as a whole and required the Fifth Committee and the Secretariat, as well as the Advisory Committee, to re-examine their working methods.

13. **The Chairman** acknowledged the complexity of the process and noted that each body had its own responsibility for ensuring the expeditious execution of the Fifth Committee's work.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.